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Title: Need to protect the interests of domestic arecanut growers distressed due to decline in the price of the produce caused by import of low-priced arecanut.

SHRI NALIN KUMAR KATEEL (DAKSHINA KANNADA): Sir, India imports arecanut mainly from Bangladesh and Nepal. The prices of locally grown varieties declined with imported arecanut costing much less than the domestic produce. Members of Parliament from arecanut growing States in the South and East have already requested to increase the price for imported arecanuts. With this increase in import price, the price of arecanut will not go below Rs 100 a kg in the domestic market, giving much needed relief to growers. The Union Government has not appointed a senior counsel to argue the case in the Supreme Court to safeguard the interests of the arecanut growers. Neither has it initiated any steps to withdraw the Affidavit in SLP No.16308 of 2007. High taxes in some arecanut producing States have discouraged private traders' participation. There has to be rationalisation of taxes in the country to curb market distortions. Currently, taxes on arecanut vary from State to State. If there is uniform tax, traders will purchase from farmers directly. I urge the Union Ministries of Agriculture and Commerce and Industry to protect the interests of arecanut growers.